

Senior citizens and the TV advertising in Hungary



It is not surprising that consumers in older age groups are becoming a more important part of the market, because their number and disposable income is growing in the wealthier industrial countries. Marketing for the 50+ age group is focused on the needs and the customer behaviour of the elderly. We are experiencing a major change in the researched group related to the way these consumers spend as they grow more discerning in their purchasing choices. 50+ marketing in Hungary is still struggling to catch up with European trends. Through our survey and analysis we hope to take the first steps in improving this state of affairs. 556 seniors were asked about their needs, purchasing habits, their opinions of advertising, and in general, how marketing is changing their purchasing decisions. We were surprised by some of the responses and these results have helped us to achieve a deeper understanding of their attitudes and motivations.

Over the last two decades, the advanced industrial nations of the world have experienced a relatively new phenomenon: population stagnation and even a fall in population numbers. While the birth rate has been decreasing, at the same time these nations have been experiencing vastly increased economic and industrial productivity, improvements in healthcare and pharmaceutical advances, greater wealth creation and the adoption of healthier lifestyles. This has led to a whole new chapter in human history in which the number of households of predominantly older ages groups has increased and those with younger members has decreased. Many advanced industrial nations now have higher numbers from the upper age groups than children, creating a new episode in human history in which the elderly are dominant.^[3]

Overall this is a genuinely global phenomenon. The ageing of the world's

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population may be the most important demographic change in human history.^[4] The “ageing society” brings into question every economic and social assumption that we previously held. We do not have developed social standards, values, appropriate social structures, institutions or cultural patterns to meet this new phenomenon. This lack of adequate social mechanisms is perhaps understandable for now, as we are only at the beginning of what has been referred to as the ‘Age Wave’,^[5] but it will become an increasingly urgent task to prepare for the challenges of this new situation in the near future.

The trend of an increasingly top-heavy generation pattern is influencing every sub-system of society from politics and health-care to pensions and migration, and the economic impact is extremely varied and complex. Among other results, it will certainly influence economic growth, the labour market and consumption. None of the countries currently seeing this phenomenon have any experience in how to deal with it or how to fit their economic requirements to the change in the size of their population groups of younger and older citizens.

One of the key areas in which these changes will be felt is the marketplace for goods and services. Markets throughout the world are going through significant changes and competition is fierce. The number of customers is getting lower with their structural and compositional changes. This will lead to a rearrangement in demographic trends and in the nature of the market itself. Relatively few market segments will grow in the next few years, and those who are successful in these areas will be able to reap great benefits in these changing times. One of most significant segment projected to expand is that of the older population, which until recently has been neglected by marketers. However in the future it will become one of the most important submarkets, with huge potential. It is likely in fact that the older age group will become the most important, the largest, and the most solvent group in the first half of the 21st century.^[6]

Consumption among younger age groups will decline, partly due to the decline in the number of young people, and partly because there will be a greater need for them to save for pension insurance in preparation for the future, resulting in a decline in consumption per capita. The bell is already tolling for marketing and advertising activities that target younger people; the significance of the youth from a consumer point of view will atrophy. While the second half of the last century was about the young, it is the older age groups which will dominate marketing in the first half of this century.

In a society composed mostly of older members, products and services require a radical transformation. Every enterprise needs to adapt to these demo-

[4] Hofmeister-Tóth, Á. – Kelemen, K. – Piskóti, M. (2011): *A kognitív életkor és az 50+ generáció környezettudatos fogyasztói magatartása*. Marketing&Menedzsment, 3. 56.

[5] Dychtwald, K. – Flower, J. (1990): *Age Wave*. Bantam Books.

[6] Hock, E. M. – Bader, B. (2001): *Kauf- und Konsumverhalten der 55plus-Generation*. Thexis Fachbericht Marketing, 3. 1-2.

graphic changes. Those enterprises which switch to products oriented for the older age groups, and who place less emphasis on youth market segments, so that they can target older consumers with products, services and advertising, will be able to achieve greater profit.

With the average growth of prosperity in developed states, the size of the older age groups will grow in parallel with the number of consumers. The elderly have never previously been so wealthy on average. Savings for people over 50 are higher than any other age group in the population.^[7] There is a powerful consumer trend in developed countries: the older age groups enjoy purchasing goods and services and are much more likely to spend more, and more often, than their ancestors.

These trends may vary slightly from country to country, but the general direction and intensity of the trends is undeniable in Western Europe, North America, and Japan.^[8] As far as the structure of the population is concerned, the nations of Central Europe have similar patterns to Western Europe even today, but due to the difference in economic development, consumption is lower by comparison.

In Hungary, the salary of people over 50 shows a wide variation, and financial, market opportunities are nowhere near as good as in the more developed western states. Working families with grown up and independent children are in the best position. The pension income in the country, however, is not very high, the state pension of 260,000 older consumers barely reaches 30,000 forints (appr. 100 Euros), and almost 2 million people live on minimum income levels.^[9] Thus most people in Hungary over fifty do not yet have a genuinely disposable income and only a small percentage can be counted as regular consumers. However, the age group taken on average is still a significant market segment. The financial circumstances of the oldest age groups are especially modest, but they can still represent target market segment for sales and store reductions.

Overall, the potential economic impact of the older age groups is undeniable. Despite the purchasing power of these groups and the demographic and social trends which point to their potential in the future, it is evident that the markets have not yet discovered them. So the common stereotypes for the elderly, which are clearly outdated and inaccurate, live on. They are still characterised as ailing, lonely, passive, poor and cautious. The image is one of a group that barely consumes anything, rarely even goes shopping and in short is simply insignificant from a marketing point of view and thus excluded.^[10]

[7] Branger, K - Tillmann, R. - Röthlisberger, P.: (2000): *Ältere Menschen in der Schweiz*. Neuchâtel. 7.; Rutishauser, F. (2005): *Seniorenmarketing*. Hamburg, Diplomica GmbH. 2.; Deutsches Seminar für Tourismus (2002): *Ran an die Alten - Seniorenmarketing im Tourismus*. DSFT, Berlin. 5-8.

[8] Otten (2009): op. cit. 17.

[9] Monostori, J. (2009): Nyugdíjrendszer, nyugdíjba vonulás. In: Monostori, J. - Őri, P. - S. Molnár, E. - Spéder, Zs. (eds.): *Demográfiai portré 2009*. 89-90.

[10] Stroud, D. (2006): *The 50-Plus Market*. Kogan Page, London. 1-6.

Until recently, marketing and advertising professionals have simply ignored the elderly, and marketing aimed at these age groups is a brand new phenomenon. Marketing effort remains focused on the needs of the youth segment. Most attention goes to those between 18 and 35, and companies spend the greater part of their budgets in marketing targeted at this age group, while the older age group only receives passing attention. The older people are, the less companies spend to reach them (80% of marketing budgets targets the youth segment).^[11]

In theory, this should not be a difficult task for marketers – in developed countries the older age groups represent the wealthier social class, they have greater disposable income, the numbers of these consumers are increasing, and there is almost no competition for this segment. In view of these factors, these sections of society should be a simple and clear target for marketers. In Hungary, the financial status of these segments is very modest so far, even if individually there may be some exceptions, but the numbers are large and growing continually, thus adding to the total, so that even today they could be counted as an important market segment.

The near future belongs to the older age groups. The attitude of society towards these people is becoming a more and more important question: will they continue to be regarded, from the consumer point of view, as insignificant and inconsequential, or will their value be recognized and acknowledged?

MEDIA CONSUMPTION OF OLDER AGE GROUPS WITH REGARD TO TV

Media consumption plays a significant role in how the older members of society spend their free time, and this has been shown in a number of surveys. The consumption of radio, television and newspapers for these groups is fairly evenly balanced. The internet is not as popular in this group, but in the last decade the number of internet users has seen a notable increase. An interesting phenomenon is that in parallel with the number of internet users, time spent watching television or listening to the radio has also grown, so the internet does not replace these media but in fact supplements the classic media sources and this is discernible among the older age groups as well. This is because they use each media channel for a different purpose: the web for communication and fact-checking, and TV and radio for entertainment and more detailed, in-depth information gathering.^[12]

As far as traditional media consumption among older age groups is concerned, there is no discernible difference between wealthier Western-European nations and Hungary. Consumption and significance only diverges in the area of internet use, since the internet is not used as much among these groups.

[11] Niemelä-Nyrhinen, J. (2007): *Baby Boom Consumers and Technology: Shooting down stereotypes*. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 24. 305–312.; Kirsch, J. (2003): *Senioren – Marktsegment der Zukunft*. In: Rabe-Lieb (hrsg.): *Zukunftsperspektiven des Marketing – Paradigmenwechsel und Neuausrichtungen*. Berlin. 182–183.; Stroud (2006): op. cit. 181.

[12] Rutishauser (2005): op. cit. 22–23.

Table 1: German and Swiss Media Consumption by Age Group (%)

Regular users	14-49 years old	50-65 years old	over 66
TV	66	72	82
Rádió	74	77	82
Daily newspaper	50	76	82
Free newspaper	56	57	55
Other newspapers	42	52	56
Internet	40	22	4
Movie	30	11	5

Source: Rutishauser (2005): op. cit. 23.

Older age groups often use different media sources from the youth, and they also use it in a different way. The motivation for choosing media sources among the older groups is different from the youth. Younger consumers are more interested in entertainment, while people over 60 tend to be looking for detailed information. The media consumption of people above 50, in terms of time spent, is somewhat above the average. At the beginning of the 21st century in Germany, it was specifically 500 minutes (almost six and a half hours). In comparing the most popular media, the difference was greater: in younger age groups the radio is more popular, while in older age groups television is becoming more popular.

Media usage obviously does not depend only on the age; it also depends on personality, literacy, and educational level. A more educated and active person is more likely to seek in-depth information from print media, for example.

A majority of the elderly is dissatisfied with and critical of what the media can offer. Survey respondents over 50 feel that there is an over-abundance of choice in the media. This dissatisfaction is shared with a third of the 14 to 49 age group respondents.^[13]

Listening to the radio or watching television represents the largest proportion of leisure time usage among the older age groups. In the higher age ranges, watching television is more popular and after retirement it shows an enormous rise, while time spent listening to the radio among those over 60 decreases. In western countries, recreation activities for the over 50's are: 42% watching television, 40% listening to the radio, while reading a daily newspaper represents only 8%. In 2000, people

[13] Kaupp, (2000): Senioren als Zielgruppe der Werbung. In: Meyer-Hentschel Management Consulting (hrsg.): *Handbuch Senioren-Marketing*. Frankfurt am Main. 174.

over 50 watched television for almost 4 hours a day, while respondents between 30-49 watched an hour less.^[14] Older citizens listen to the radio – primarily news channels – more often in the morning or in the early afternoon. The radio is less significant in terms of commercials. Although there are many listeners among these age groups, they switch the channel during the broadcast of commercials.

Table 2: Average TV viewing time (minutes) in Germany at the Millennium

	14-49 years old	50-59 years old	60-69 years old	over 70
Radio	167	181	178	150
Television	146	183	215	227

Source: Kaupp (2000): op. cit. 176.

An initial view of the habits of older age groups in watching TV or listening to the radio may lead us to the conclusion that if marketers want to reach these groups then they need to use these two media (television and radio). But we need to exercise some caution. Television is extremely complex (in terms of images and sound), and it may be that as a medium for reaching older people, the pace of traditional commercials is too fast to generate an effective message. For this reason, commercials with a message aimed at older audiences are effective only when the information is clear and comprehensible. Similarly, radio commercials can also be somewhat difficult, although the problem is not so complex as the message is limited to sound.

In contrast with younger consumers, older people use television for obtaining news, commentary, and for travel planning/learning. They watch political shows, and in Germany for example, 95% of older citizens watch news programmes, followed by political magazines and movies (72-77%), and in third place the preference is for travel channels, cultural shows and nature documentaries. Fewer people among these age groups watch sports (44%), or talks shows (38%), health care programs (31%) or drama/music (20%).^[15]

The older audience grew up with public service broadcasting, and they are still loyal to it, and although nowadays they have access to a lot more commercial broadcasting, watching such commercial channels is less popular. 60% choose the TV programs that they want to watch from the newspaper, so programmes that target younger people are unlikely to be seen by the over 60's.^[16]

[14] Blödorn, S. – Gerhards, M. (2004): *Mediennutzung der älteren Generation*. Media Perspektiven, 4. 163-175.

[15] Otten (2009): op. cit. 109-110.

[16] Popular TV channels in Germany: RTL, SAT1, NTV, ARD1, ZDF, Kabel1. Rutishauser (2005): op. cit. 24.

Senior Hungarian citizens are more likely to spend their leisure time watching television than other age groups, and for most of them this is their only source of information, entertainment, and the only way to spend their free time. According to representative surveys, retired people between 60 and 80 spend more than 20 hours each week watching TV, couples over 40 without children spend more than 5 hours a day, and single pensioners spend 7 hours a day.^[17]

OLDER CONSUMERS IN HUNGARIAN COMMERCIALS

Television commercials, especially when looking at the TV viewing habits of the over 60's, are crucially important to marketers and it is extremely useful to analyse how this age group is portrayed in commercials. In the advanced western countries the role of older people in commercials is shown more often in a more positive way, although this is not universally the case. In Hungary the position is more unfavourable.

Some research in Hungary has already investigated the role of the over fifties in commercials and in public broadcasting.^[18] The key questions in these surveys were whether advertisers targeted the elderly, what kind of role the older characters play in a commercial, whether they portray older people in a respectful way, as a valuable member of society, or whether they portray the elderly as an unnecessary burden on society.^[19] After analysing over a hundred advertisements it was revealed that the elderly are barely shown at all in commercials and in the few instances where they were given a role, they were depicted mostly in a negative context.

350 advertisements were examined in one of the surveys and of these, 77% did not deal with issues related to older age groups or include these groups as characters. 18% of the commercials made references to statistics about the elderly, or included an older actor. Another study, which analysed 100 different advertisements with the same aim, found only six such advertisements.^[20]

It is possible that the quantitative data alone does not fully account for the portrayal of the elderly in commercials, and that there may still exist a positive reflection through the values of what is shown or a more understanding and sympathetic depiction of older people. Unfortunately, the studies found that this was not in fact the case.

In television commercials, which included the use of older actors, fewer than a fifth were positive illustrations of the elderly (e.g. knowledgeable adviser, narrator, conversation partner, or helper). Around Christmas, the role that actors play

[17] Kollányi, B. – Székely, L. (2006): *Hátrányos helyzetű csoportok az információs társadalomban*. Információs társadalom, 2. 48-67.; Zelenay A. (2005): *Tévéfogyasztás a különböző családi életciklusokban*. Jel-Kép, 4. 11.

[18] Jászberényi J. (2008): *Az öregek nem is léteznek? Az időskorúak ábrázolása a magyarországi televíziós reklámokban*. Médiakutató, 9(3). 35-36.

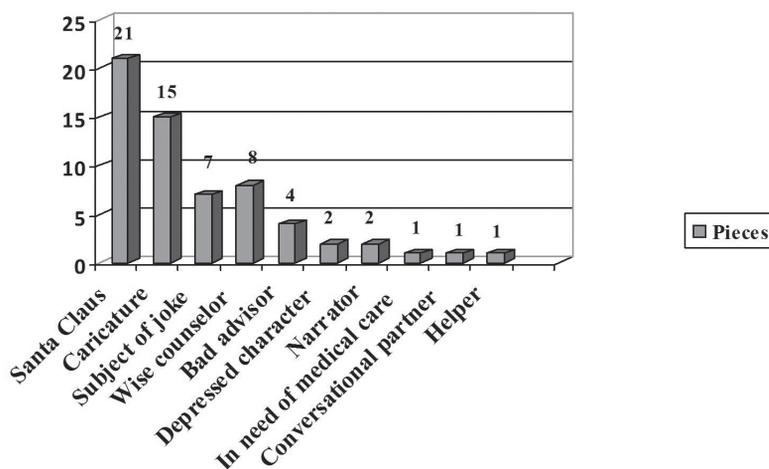
[19] In every season there are around 150-200 commercials, which are replaced every quarter.

[20] Jászberényi (2008): op. cit.

is more positive (if only because Santa Claus is traditionally played by an older male), but this is only seasonal and at other times of the year it is certainly not the case. In 22% of the commercials, the elderly are portrayed negatively (as the target of a joke, depressed, giving poor advice, in need of medical care), while in 25% of commercials featuring older actors, they are depicted in neutral roles.^[21]

It turns out that in Hungarian commercials there are surprisingly few old narrators – compared with western countries and with our own traditions (e.g. the type of a story-teller grandparents). The most sought-after commercial male voice (CIB, Chappi) belongs to an actor who is also an official voice on Duna TV public broadcasting. In the last few years he has been warned several times that he has only a few years left in this profession because his voice is starting to be “aged out”.^[22]

Figure 1: Employer and employee point of view



Source: Jászberényi (2008): op. cit.

The conclusion of these studies is that the advertising industry regards the elderly as an obstacle and that they do not view the older audience as worthy of attention. They request old actors only if the script specifically requires it – such as the role of a Santa Claus – and an older person is rarely portrayed as a positive figure but rather a caricature, a negative character or the subject of a joke. This type of negative portrayal reaches its peak in the commercials for the store ‘Electro World’, where the oldest member of the family is depicted as a helpless idiot.^[23]

[21] Jászberényi (2008): op. cit.

[22] Jászberényi (2008): op. cit. 41 footer 8: We mentioned Tamás Széles, who was in 2013 40 years old.

[23] Commercial can be found at: <http://www.reklamfilmek.com/video.php?firm=26&video=54>, Jászberényi (2008): op. cit. 41.

In Hungary, advertising is still in the initial stages of turning away from this discriminative portrayal of older people, but good intentions are sometimes also displeasing and unreal; characters bursting with health and constant smiling faces are far from reality. One such failure can be seen in the 2007 *Dove ProAge* advertising campaign, which presented an unfeasibly young model in the role of an older woman. The purpose of the campaign was to provide information about older people and their desire to be appreciated, but instead they showed a woman who posed as a young girl, implying that they are unable to accept the fact of their ageing, and this results in both the commercial and the product being unappealing. Even life insurance campaigns are built upon a misunderstanding. These commercials suggest that elderly people are inactive, that they cannot take care of themselves and that is why they need financial help.^[24]

Of course there are always a few exceptions: a well-executed, representative, respectful depiction of older people who can provide help to the younger generation. The cleaner commercial with an old famous actress is one of these positive examples. There is also an advertisement for potato crisps in which the grandfather misses “the good old things” of his youth, and his daughter-in-law offers him this product, which reminds him in a positive way of his youth. This commercial is also important because it reminds the elderly that they have their own prejudices against youth, or anything that is new.^[25]

The Hungarian advertising industry’s aversion to the elderly can be attributed to several factors. Without any doubt, what commercial professionals themselves feel or think about the elderly can affect their work by generating negative prejudice. The main reason is more complex, because this behaviour reflects Hungarian society’s views in general of the elderly. It confirms that commercials, which portray the elderly in a poor light, are popular with younger generations.^[26]

Our own research results

In October 2012 we undertook a survey, which focused on the role of the elderly in television commercials in Hungary. We watched 180 different commercials over a two-week period from both public and commercial broadcasting (m1, TV2, RTL Klub, Viasat3). Commercials for older age groups during peak times were barely aired at all, and these commercials were shown only in the afternoon, at a time of day when these age groups would make up the majority of TV viewers.

Our study confirmed the findings of similar research carried out four years previously. In Hungary, only a few commercials directly target the elderly or use an elderly actor. Of these 180 commercials, almost 90% (161 cases) did not show anyone over 50 years old at all, and neither were any of these commercials aimed

[24] Jászberényi (2008): op. cit. phrases from the author.

[25] Examples from Jászberényi (2008): op. cit.

[26] Jászberényi (2008): op. cit. 40–41, last footer.

at the older generation. Only 19 advertisements (or one in ten of the commercials included in this study) involved older actors. Of these, only three involved products specifically aimed at older consumers (Supradyn 50+, Proenzi3, Corega denture paste) and obviously these commercials used older actors. These three commercials were positive, and portrayed the elderly favourably. The Supradyn 50+ advertisement depicted the older generation particularly well, and the sporting lifestyle of the good-looking older male character was very well portrayed.

The remaining 16 commercials – which mostly targeted younger generations – also showed older actors and in 13 cases illustrated them with positive and life-like characteristics. Of these, 5 involved an older person in the principal role (Tchibo, Takarékpont Bank, Saga fruit tee, Eurovit vitamins, Housewives from Aldi). In 8 commercials the older actors were portrayed in a supporting role or as a caricature (Actimel, American Express, Blend-a-med with an old dentist, Weekly Answer, Jofogas.hu, Telekom, Merci chocolate).

Table 3: The role of the elderly on TV commercials (in 2012 October)

No older actor, the product is not for the elderly	161
Commercial with elderly actor	19
Negative or unreal portrayal of the elderly	3
Positive or realistic portrayal of the elderly	16
Older actor, the product is for the elderly	3
Other commercial with older person in main role	5
Other commercial with older person in subordinate role	8

Source: authors' own research.

We found only three commercials where the illustration of the elderly was troubling. These included the Nestea campaign, of which both advertisements portrayed a young and an old actor. Young actors are mostly used in soda commercials, which is why Nestea's idea might seem exciting and unconventional. However they showed an old lady positively in only one of their ads, and this as a completely unreal, unsophisticated character who jumps off a cliff. The other Nestea advertisement showed an old male as an odd and inept character. The Erste Bank commercial was the only one in which an especially negative older character was portrayed - as the clearly malicious old lady next door.

Overall, of the currently-aired commercials, it is rare to find even one which includes a role for an older person or in which the product is aimed at the elderly. However, at the same time it is a big step forward that in those cases where an older character is shown, he or she is portrayed in a positive light.

HUNGARIAN SENIORS' OPINION OF TV COMMERCIALS – OUR RESEARCH

In the Spring of 2013, we organised a survey of older age group students at Széchenyi University in Győr before the first semester of the “Senior University”. 556 people – half of the participants in that programme – completed our questionnaire.

The survey included several themes through which we tried to obtain a clear picture of our respondents, and of their habits. We were curious to know

- how they felt about their age,
- how they spent their free time,
- what kind of media they were using and at what time of the day,
- how much they were using the internet and for what purpose,
- whether they were buying online,
- what their opinion of commercials was,
- whether they had ever bought a product after seeing a commercial,
- which aspects influenced their decision to buy,
- where they shopped.

The answers provided us with very interesting opportunities for analysis.

The general characters of the sample

In terms of its gender distribution, the sample is not representative, since 77.7%, 432 of respondents were women, and only 124 (22.3%) were men. It is true that nationally women predominate, but not to such an extent (over the age of sixty, 61% of the population in Hungary is female).^[27]

The average age of the sample was 67.2 years, with males a little higher (68.8 years), while females were half a year younger (66.7 years). The youngest respondents were 54 and the oldest was 90 years old.

Almost 80% of the respondents had a declared income of less than €600. This confirmed our assumption that in Hungary the older age group has a lower disposable income. In our samples, women had, on average, far less income than men, and there seemed to be a trend that in the lower income categories, women vastly outnumbered men.

Table 4: Income distribution

	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
under 70,000 Ft	31	5.6	2	1.6	29	6.7
70 to 120,000 Ft	250	45.0	35	28.2	215	49.8

[27] http://www.wesley.hu/sites/default/files/fajlok/cikk_idosek_helyzete.pdf. In Hungary there are around 2.2 million people over 60, and of these, 1.35 million are female, 850.000 male. (Academy of the Elderly 2010.)

	Total	%	Male	%	Female	%
120 to 170,000 Ft	168	30.2	50	40.3	118	27.3
170 to 220,000 Ft	65	11.7	24	19.4	41	9.5
above 220,000 Ft	22	4.0	10	8.1	12	2.8
No response	20	3.6	3	2.4	17	3.9
Total	556	100.0	124	100.0	432	100.0

Source: authors' own research.

Table 5: Income distribution by gender

		Male (%)	Female (%)
under 70.000 Ft	31	6.5	93.5
70.000-120.000Ft	250	14.0	86.0
120.000-170.000 Ft	168	29.8	70.2
170.000-220.000 Ft	65	36.9	63.1
above 220 000 Ft	22	45.5	54.5
No response	20	15.0	85.0
Total	556	22.3	77.7

Source: authors' own research.

The students of the Senior University had higher levels of educational attainment than average Hungarians of the same age. 37% had a university degree, and only 13% had not reached high school graduation level.

Educational level represented a significant difference between genders, with males being better qualified, and more of them had a university degree than the 50+ age group nationwide. This university degree advantage was observed among those over 54, and high school graduation among those over 69. Women in younger generations have a higher educational level.^[28]

Our survey indicated a strong correlation between level of education and income levels. If someone in the sample had a higher level of education, they were more likely to have a higher income to provide for their old age. Those who completed only elementary school, can be found only in lower income categories, and the trend suggests that the higher the income of the respondent, the more likely it is that they will have a university degree.^[29]

[28] Central Statistics Office: census 2011. Regional data from Budapest. CSO, Budapest. 2013. 14.

[29] The correlations of the income and qualifications table is seen at the annex.

Table 6: Qualifications by gender

	Total	%	Female	%	Male	%
Elementary school	15	2.7	14	3.2	1	0.8
Vocational school	59	10.6	47	10.9	12	9.7
High school graduate	275	49.5	223	51.6	52	41.9
University graduate	207	37.2	148	34.3	59	47.6
Total	556	100.0	432	100.0	124	100.0

Source: authors' own research.

Quarter of the respondents were single, or widowed (which, over 70, is common), 60% were married or living with a partner. There is an enormous difference between men and women. While 90% of men in the sample were living with a wife or partner, almost a half of the women were living alone, or widowed. This could be due to the longer life expectancy of women; data from national statistics show more widows than widowers (in Hungary of the 700,000 people over 60, 70% are female and 50.4% are also widows).^[30]

Table 7: Marital status

	Total	%	Female	%	Male	%
Single	75	13.5	68	15.8	7	5.7
Living as couple	337	60.6	227	52.5	110	88.6
Widow/Widower	144	25.9	137	31.7	7	5.7
Total	556	100.0	432	100.0	124	100.0

Source: authors' own research.

Household living arrangements were as follows: 54% of the respondents lived in a household of two with their partner, 30% of them lived alone, 16% of them lived with at least two other people. Three-quarters of the males, and almost a half of the females were living together with their partner, and a male living alone was rare, while among the women this was quite common.

For marketing communication experts, this suggests that if they want to reach older males, then they should start with couples who live together as a model, but if females are their main target then it would be more relevant to use single living model.

[30] 20 respondents completed this advertising part (who decided no to answer the income questions) 14 of them marked 1 point, only one of them marked 2 points.

Conclusion

It is clear that our survey is not a representative sample, as it does not reflect in every aspect the attributes of the average Hungarian in these older age groups. The difference from the national average in our survey primarily concerned educational levels and gender composition. Nevertheless, the answers provided can be evaluated scientifically, and we obtained usable data for analysis. Our conclusions are applicable to certain subsets of older people; particularly those for educationally qualified female seniors are general and valid, while aspects from the whole age group are relevant only within certain limits.

Attitudes of older consumers to television advertising

In the following section, we examine responses to the questionnaire from this group concerning their attitudes towards television advertising. The questionnaire includes six questions in the advertising section on this theme specifically but we look at just three here: 'I enjoy watching a lot of commercials', 'The quality of television commercials is excellent', and 'I am satisfied with the portrayal of the elderly in commercials'). The responses to each of these statements will be analysed one by one, based on gender, qualifications and income.

Television commercials viewing habits among older age group

First of all, we examined responses to the statement: I enjoy watching a lot of commercials.

Table 8: TV advertising viewing habits based on gender, qualifications and income^[31] (on a scale from 1 to 5)

	Total	%	Female	%	Male	%
Not typical (1)	383	85.3	294	85.5	89	84.8
.(2)	46	10.2	36	10.4	10	9.6
.(3)	13	2.9	10	2.9	3	2.8
.(4)	5	1.1	2	0.6	3	2.8
Very typical (5)	2	0.5	2	0.6	-	-
Total	449	100	344	100	105	100
Average (based on the scale)	1,21	-	1,20	-	1,18	-

[31] 20 respondents completed this advertising part (who decided no to answer the income questions) 14 of them marked 1 point, only one of them marked 2 points.

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	Elementary	Vocational	High school	%	University	%
Not typical (1)	3	32	196	88.3	152	83.1
.(2)	1	4	17	7.7	24	13.1
.(3)	-	2	6	2.7	5	2.7
.(4)	-	-	3	1.3	2	1.1
Very typical (5)	1	1	-	-	-	-
Total	5	39	222	100	183	100
Average (on the scale)	-	1,31	1,17	-	1,22	-

	<70,000 Ft	70 000-120,000	120-170,000	170-220,000	>220 000 Ft
Not typical (1)	14 77.9%	181 91,4%	114 78.1%	43 82.7%	17 85.0%
.(2)	2 11.1%	11 5.6%	23 15.8%	6 11.6%	3 15.0%
.(3)	1 5.5%	5 2.5%	5 3.4%	2 3.8%	-
.(4)	-	-	4 2.7%	1 1.9%	-
Very typical (5)	1 5.5%	1 0.5%	-	-	-
Total	18	198	146	52	20
Average (1-5 scale)	1,44	1,26	1,31	1,25	1,15

Source: authors' own research.

Most of the respondents are dismissive of commercials on television, and if they can, they prefer not to watch them. This five-grade scale shows after 449 answers an average of only 1.2 points. Answer 3 was chosen only in 4.5% of cases, so a small and insignificant fraction showed just a little enthusiasm for advertising as an entertainment source. There was no difference between male and female responses; their enthusiasm for commercials both remained at a very low level.

Analysis based on education indicated no difference between the answers concerning viewing habits, for TV commercials. They all equally disapproved. The group with the high school graduation level was most strongly opposed (88% of them marked the 1 point on the scale, and their average point was only 1.17). Graduates were slightly less strongly opposed (83% of them chose 1 point and their average was 1.22) and those who graduated from a vocational school were less harsh (82% of them marked 1 point and their average was 1.31).^[32]

There were differences in the study as a whole based on incomes, but clearly these trends were not significant (especially if we note the actual numbers). The viewing habits for older groups watching TV commercials are independent of income factors; they do not enjoy watching them.

[32] The number of those who finished elementary school is so low that it would be misleading.

Opinions of the quality of TV advertising

The second question we looked at involved analysing responses to the statement - ‘The quality of television commercials is excellent’.

Table 9: ‘The quality of TV commercials is excellent’ – answers in total by gender, by education and by income^[33] (on a scale from 1 to 5)

	Total	%	Female	%	Male	%
I do not agree (1)	317	70.6	241	70.1	76	72.4
.(2)	80	17.8	63	18.3	17	16.2
.(3)	39	8.7	32	9.3	7	6.7
.(4)	10	2.2	5	1.4	5	4.7
I completely agree (5)	3	0.7	3	0.9	-	-
Total	449	100	344	100	105	100
Average (on this scale)	1,45	-	1,45	-	1,44	-

	Elementary	Vocational	High school	%	University	%
I do not agree (1)	3	29	169	76.1	116	63.4
.(2)	1	4	32	14.4	43	23.5
.(3)	-	5	13	5.9	21	11.5
.(4)	-	-	7	3.2	3	1.6
I completely agree (5)	1	1	1	0.4	-	-
Total	5	39	222	100	183	100
Average (on this scale)	-	1,46	1,37	-	1,51	-

	<70,000 Ft	70-120,000	120-170,000	170-220,000	>220,000 Ft
I do not agree (1)	12 66.6%	158 79.8%	89 61.0%	33 63.5%	13 65%
.(2)	1 5.6%	23 11.6%	38 26.0%	11 21.2%	6 30%
.(3)	2 11.1%	15 7.6%	13 8.9%	7 13.4%	1 5%
.(4)	1 5.6%	1 0.5%	6 4.1%	1 1.9%	-
I completely agree (5)	2 11.1%	1 0.5%	-	-	-
Total	18	198	146	52	20
Average (on this scale)	1,89	1,30	1,56	1,54	1,40

Source: authors’ own research.

[33] Of the 20 respondents who decided not to answer the income question 15 of them filled out the advertisement block, 12 marked 1 point, 2 and 3 points received one hit each and only one of them marked 4 points as the highest result.

Our respondents believe that the quality of television commercials is poor. This five-grade scale shows an average of only 1.45 from 449 responses and option 3 or 4 or 5 was chosen by only eighth of people in the study. The responses were only slightly less disapproving than those concerning commercial viewing habits. There was no difference of opinion based on gender. Both males and females were equally critical of the quality of the commercials.

There is no significant difference based on educational attainment levels; they all equally think that the quality of advertising on television is poor. Most dismissive were the high school graduates group (only 10% of them gave 3 points, their average was 1.37). University graduates were a little less opposed (13% of them gave 3 points, their average was 1.46) and those who finished a vocational school less harsh (15% of them gave 3 points and their average was 1.51).

There were differences based on income compared with the study as a whole, similar to viewing habits for TV commercials, only a little greater, but clearly the trends were not significant (especially if we note the specific numbers). The two lowest income brackets were the biggest supporters. Those who earn less than 70,000 Ft in income are the most tolerant towards the quality of advertising. On this five point scale their average point almost hit 2 and 28% selected option 3 (however the actual number of responses is very low in these brackets). Those who earn between 70,000 Ft and 120,000 Ft are the most dissatisfied; their average score is 1.3, and less than 9% marked 3 points on the scale (where there were the highest number of answers). It can be concluded therefore that views concerning the quality television commercials in the older age group do not depend on income factors.

Opinion of the elderly on the portrayal of old age in commercials

The third area we looked at was responses to the statement: ‘I am satisfied with the portrayal of the elderly in commercials’.

Table 10: ‘Satisfied with the portrayal of the elderly in commercials’ – answers by gender, by qualification and by income (on a scale from 1 to 5)⁴

	Total	%	Female	%	Male	%
I do not agree (1)	321	71.5	251	73.0	70	66.7
.(2)	65	14.4	46	13.4	19	18.1
.(3)	48	10.7	35	10.1	13	12.4
.(4)	12	2.7	9	2.6	3	2.8
I completely agree (5)	3	0.7	3	0.9	-	-
Total	449	100	344	100	105	100
Average (on this scale)	1,47	-	1,45	-	1,51	-

	Elementary	Vocational	High school	%	University	%
I do not agree (1)	4	30	167	75.2	120	65.6
.(2)	-	4	25	11.3	36	19.6
.(3)	-	4	21	9.5	23	12.6
.(4)	-	-	8	3.6	4	2.2
I completely agree (5)	1	1	1	0.4	-	-
Total	5	39	222	100	183	100
Average (on this scale)	-	1,41	1,43	-	1,51	-

	<70,000 Ft	70-120,000	120-170,000	170-220,000	>220,000 Ft
I do not agree (1)	11 61.1%	160 80.8%	100 68.5%	28 53.9%	14 70%
.(2)	4 22.2%	14 7.1%	24 16.4%	14 26.9%	5 25%
.(3)	1 5.6%	20 10.1%	15 10.3%	8 15.4%	1 5%
.(4)	-	3 1.5%	7 4.8%	2 3.9%	-
I completely agree (5)	2 11.1%	1 0.5%	-	-	-
Total	18	198	146	52	20
Average (on this scale)	1,78	1,34	1,51	1,69	1,35

Source: authors' own research.

The depiction of elderly people in television commercials is a great cause for disappointment among older age viewers. Of the 449 answers, this five-point scale showed an average of only 1.47 and only 14% (or seventh) of respondents scored it at least 3 points. These responses are slightly less harsh than we saw in the viewing habits, and show almost the same opinion as the responses concerning the quality of commercials. There were only minor variations between males and females concerning this issue and generally their opinions coincide.

We cannot find any significant differences between the respondents based on educational levels alone. They were all dissatisfied with the portrayal of the elderly in commercials. Whether they had graduated from vocational school, or had high school graduation or a university degree, their opinions were more or less the same: around 14% marked the 3 point on this scale. On this five-point scale their average range (between 1.41 and 1.51) represents a small margin.

The differences in the income categories here were bigger than they were for commercial viewing habits, and were similar to responses for the quality of advertising. There were no unequivocal trends that could be drawn from the results based on whether the respondents had a high or low income.

The two lowest and the two highest income categories are the two corner points. In addition, this time the group with an income of under 70,000 Ft is the bigger average value. The income group 170,000–220,000 Ft represented the lowest percentage which gave only 1 point; and the highest percentage who

marked 3 points. Those with an income of between 70,000–120,000 Ft income and above 220,000 Ft income were the most negative. They gave the minimum amount of 3 points.

It is clear that the responses are not income-dependent. There was equal disappointment in the way the elderly were portrayed in commercials.

Respondents who decided not to answer questions about advertising

It is noteworthy that 107 people decided not to answer this part our questionnaire (19.2% of the whole sample, almost all fifth of all respondents) and for this reason we could examine only 449 returned answers, which was 80.8% of the whole sample.

The composition of those who chose not to provide answers in this section is instructive.

There were 88 women and 19 men. So taking into account the gender balance of the whole sample (77.7% were females), a slightly larger proportion of the women left this part of the questionnaire empty (in 82.2%).

55 of this group were over 70, while 52 were younger. This suggests that a higher proportion than would be expected of those over 70 chose not to answer (33.6% were at least 70 years old). This also might indicate that in older age groups, people consume less and for this reason they are less concerned about advertising, on the other hand they spent more of their lives exposed to less sophisticated advertising.

In terms of educational levels, 9.3% had completed elementary school, 26.2% had graduated from vocational schools, 46.7% were high school graduates, and 15.9% were university graduates (10, 28, 50 and 17 people). This suggests that the educational level of those people who decided not to answer these questions was in general lower than those who did.

We also examined income ranges for these non-responders but it did not show significant differences compared to the whole sample, and therefore we were unable to draw meaningful conclusions from it.

Factor analysis

The questionnaire data was sufficient to apply further statistical study that could provide a deeper and more comprehensive level of analysis. One such opportunity is factor analysis. We examined the six variables which concerned advertising with relevant statistical methods and after it proved to be applicable to factor analysis, we added them to 3 factors which explain 81% of the variance across the original variables in the whole survey.^[34]

[34] Bartlett test, Kayser-Meyer-Olkin values, MSA (Measure of Sampling Adequacy) – Annex 2.

Two variables determine the first factor ('I am satisfied with the portrayal of the elderly in commercials'; 'The quality of commercials is excellent'), is the factor which explains this variance the strongest. We also used two variables in the second ('I enjoy reading free advertiser newspapers' or 'I am interested in advertisements in newspapers') and the third factor ('I enjoy listening to advertisements on the radio'; 'I enjoy watching commercials on the TV').

We can label the first factor 'TV commercial satisfaction', the second, 'Printed advertisements', and the last one concerns 'Radio and television commercials'.

Table 11: Consumers' perception of advertising – whole sample, rotated factor matrix

	Component		
	1	2	3
I am satisfied with the portrayal of the elderly in TV commercials	.876	.155	.227
The quality of commercials is excellent	.794	.254	.331
I enjoy reading free advertiser newspapers/catalogues	.233	.883	.073
I enjoy reading newspaper advertisements	.126	.811	.348
I enjoy listening to advertisements on the radio	.209	.266	.844
I enjoy watching commercials on the TV	.432	.127	.737

Source: authors' own research.

We found that looking at the main component analysis by gender explained 80% in older females and 85% in older males. By applying rotated factor loading, we were able to determine three principal components, which cover three different attitudes between males and females, the pattern being identical to the whole sample in both gender groups.

We can use factor analysis to examine together two of the three relevant questions about television advertising ('I am satisfied with the portrayal of the elderly in commercials' and 'The quality of the commercials is excellent'). The given answers on these two variables can be analysed together, and this indicator shows how satisfied the respondents of the sample were with the commercials - especially with those which included an elderly character. The answers provided on these two variables show a very strong correlation, and this factor indicates the aversion of the elderly to television commercials.

ANNEX

Annex 1.

These 161 television commercials viewed for this survey, did not target the elderly, and did not include older actors:

007 Parfüm, 7 Days Hazelnut

Actival, Activia, Afrin, Aldi's housewives II., Algoflex, Always, Ambipur, Apród.hu, Aspirin, Audispray, Avon - City Rush, Avon Anew

Balaton chocolate, Baumax, Bepanthen, Béres Csepp, Bioapon, Bio Slim, Biovanne, Blend-a-med II., Boci chocolate, Bonduelle, Brise - Glade, Budapest Bank

Calgon, Canespro - Canesten, Carefree, Centrum multivitamin, Cheetos, Cofidis, Coldrex maxi grip, Colgate Maxwhite

Dacia Duster, Danette, Decathlon, Digi Okos, Dipankrin, Domestos Attax, Dormeo, Dove, Dulcolax

Elseve L'Oreal, Erste II. - Ferrari pack, Espumisan,

Fem3, F & F, Finish, Ford, Friskies, Frosta, Fundamenta

Garnier BB, Gillette Proglide, Giuseppe Pizza, Györi Édes (biscuit)

Hankook, Heineken, Herz,

Jó reggelt (biscuit), Jovital, Jysk

Kalmopyrin, Calvin Klein, KFC, K&H Bank, Kia Ceed, Kinder Bueno, Kinder Maxi, Kinder Slice of Milk chocolate, Knoppers, Knorr -chinese

Lancome, Lidl I., Lidl II. Italian pastas, Listerine, L'Oreal-Revital

MagneB6, Marvel - Spiderman, Max Faktor, McDonald's Mamot, McDonald's II., Magnezium+ Orotat, Magyar Posta (post), Medve cheese, Mexx, Milka, Mindig Tv, Mindig Tv II., Mizo, Mucopront,

Negro I., Negro II., Neocitran, Neogranormon, Nescafe, Nesquik, Nivea, Nők Lapja, Normaflore, No-Spa, Nurofen forte

Ofotért, Old Spice, Online kupon, Orbit

Palette, Panadol, Pantene, Parodontax, Playboy parfüm, Pervoll, Prémium, Provident, Pur

Quamatel

Raiffeisen, Rama, Renault Master, Rennie, Rubophen Thermo

Salonpas, Samsung Galaxy - T-Mobile, Sanytol, Schweppes, Uma Thurman, Septofort, Shell Power, Silverkart, Snickers, Somat, Spar, Spar II. , Stodal, Strep-sils, Supradyn, Szavo

Teekanne, Telenor I. music, Telenor II. Hipernet, Tesco, Thermocare, Tchibo II., Tolle, Tomi washing pulver

Unibet, Unicredit, UPC I. Fiber Power, UPC II. direct

Valeriana, Vanish, Velux, Verbena, Vichy, Visine, Vodafone I. endless talk, Vodafone II., Voltaren

Westend, Wick, Triactin, Wick II.

Annex 2. Factor analysis

Bartlett, KMO and MSA results				
	Bartlett significance	KMO value	MSA result are greater than	Commonalities are greater than
whole sample	0.000	0.816	0.770	0.740
females	0.000	0.803	0.760	0.740
males	0.000	0.844	0.810	0.810

Total variance explained on the whole sample									
Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.331	55.511	55.511	3.331	55.511	55.511	1.699	28.323	28.323
2	.932	15.538	71.049	.932	15.538	71.049	1.612	26.873	55.196
3	.591	9.857	80.906	.591	9.857	80.906	1.543	25.710	80.906
4	.449	7.488	88.394						
5	.387	6.444	94.838						
6	.310	5.162	100.000						

Opinion concerning commercials, consumption – females, rotated factor matrix			
	Component		
	1	2	3
I am satisfied with the portrayal of the elderly in TV commercials	.868	.165	.211
The quality of commercials is excellent	.810	.226	.305
I enjoy reading free advertiser newspapers/catalogues	.220	.881	.075
I enjoy reading newspaper advertisements	.136	.817	.328
I enjoy listening to advertisements on the radio	.178	.302	.824
I enjoy watching commercials on the TV	.406	.088	.754

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HUNGARIAN SUMMARY

Míg a nyugati országokban az idős fogyasztók fontossága mára már rég tudatosult, a nyugdíjas marketing széles körben elterjedt, addig Magyarországon a vállalkozások is csak a közelmúltban kezdték felismerni a kérdés jelentőségét. A kérdés vizsgálatára alkalmas az idősek televízió reklámokban való jelenlétének az elemzése, amely szintén mutatja a nyugati országok és Magyarország közötti különbségeket. Emellett empirikus kutatást folytattunk az idősek körében a televízió reklámok megítéléséről, amelynek egyes eredményeit közöljük a tanulmányban.